

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A process for producing a magnetic recording medium comprising a non-magnetic flexible support, a non-magnetic layer comprising a non-magnetic powder and a binder, and a magnetic layer comprising a ferromagnetic powder and a binder, the non-magnetic layer being provided on top of the support, the magnetic layer being provided on top of the non-magnetic layer, and the non-magnetic powder comprising two or more types of non-magnetic powder including carbon black and a non-magnetic powder other than carbon black, the process comprising:

a step of separately dispersing a non-magnetic liquid A and a non-magnetic liquid B, the non-magnetic liquid A comprising a binder and a non-magnetic powder other than carbon black and the non-magnetic liquid B comprising carbon black and a binder;

a step of stirring and mixing the non-magnetic liquid A and the non-magnetic liquid B to prepare a non-magnetic coating solution;

providing said non-magnetic coating solution on top of said non-magnetic flexible support to obtain said non-magnetic layer; and

providing said magnetic layer on top of said non-magnetic layer.

Claim 2 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the stirring and mixing employs a thin-film spin system high speed mixer.

Claim 3 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the stirring and mixing is carried out at a peripheral speed of 25 m/sec or higher.

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Claim 4 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the dispersing of the non-magnetic liquid B employs sand-mill dispersion and ultrasonic dispersion in combination.

Claim 5 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the dispersing of the non-magnetic liquid A employs a sand mill.

Claim 6 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the non-magnetic powder other than carbon black is selected from the group consisting of a metal oxide, a metal carbonate, a metal sulfate, a metal nitride, a metal carbide, and a metal sulfide.

Claim 7 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the non-magnetic powder other than carbon black is selected from the group consisting of titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, α -iron oxide, and barium sulfate.

Claim 8 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the stirring and mixing is a batchwise treatment.

Claim 9 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the stirring and mixing is a continuous treatment.

Claim 10 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the stirring and mixing includes holding for a period of 0 to 30 sec after the peripheral speed reaches a constant speed.

Claim 11 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the carbon black is used in a range not exceeding 50 wt % relative to the non-magnetic powder other than carbon black.

Claim 12 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the carbon black is used in a range not exceeding 40 wt % of the total weight of the non-magnetic layer.

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Claim 13 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the non-magnetic powder other than carbon black has an average particle size of 0.01 to 0.2 μm .

Claim 14 (currently amended): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the non-magnetic powder other than carbon black ~~has~~ comprises particles having an average major axis length of 0.01 to 0.2 μm .

Claim 15 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the carbon black has a specific surface area of 100 to 500 m^2/g .

Claim 16 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the carbon black has a DBP oil absorption of 20 to 400 $\text{mL}/100 \text{ g}$.

Claim 17 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the carbon black has an average particle size of 5 to 80 nm .

Claim 18 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the binder used in the non-magnetic coating solution is used in the range of 5 to 50 $\text{wt } \%$ relative to the non-magnetic powder.

Claim 19 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the ferromagnetic powder is a ferromagnetic metal powder.

Claim 20 (original): The process according to Claim 1 wherein the non-magnetic flexible support is polyethylene naphthalate or polyamide.